



Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa



EDICT OF GOVERNMENT



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COMESA 001 (2004) (English): Standard for
Canned Tuna and Bonito



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COMESA HARMONISED
STANDARD

COMESA/FDHS
001:2004

Standard for Canned Tuna and Bonito

REFERENCE: FDHS 001:2004

CODEX STANDARD FOR CANNED TUNA AND BONITO*CODEX STAN 70-1981, REV. 1 -1995***1 Scope**

This standard applies to canned tuna and bonito. It does not apply to speciality products where the fish content constitutes less than 50% m/m of the contents.

2 Description**2.1 Production definition**

Canned Tuna and Bonito are the products consisting of the flesh of any of the appropriate species listed below, packed in hermetically sealed containers.

- *Thunnus alalunga*
- *Thunnus albacares*
- *Thunnus atlanticus*
- *Thunnus obesus*
- *Thunnus maccoyii*
- *Thunnus thynnus*
- *Thunnus tongoe*
- *Euthynnus affinis*
- *Euthynnus alleteratus*
- *Euthynnus lineatus*
- *Katsuwonus pelamis* (syn. *Euthynnus pelamis*)
- *Sarda chilensis*
- *Sarda orientalis*
- *Sarda sarda*

2.2 Process definition

The products shall have received a processing treatment sufficient to ensure commercial sterility.

2.3 Presentation

The product shall be presented as:

2.3.1 Solid (skin-on or skinless) - fish cut into transverse segments which are placed in the can with the planes of their transverse cut ends parallel to the ends of the can. The proportion of free flakes or chunks shall not exceed 18% of the drained weight of the container.

2.3.2 Chunk - pieces of fish most of which have dimensions of not less than 1.2cm in each direction and in which the original muscle structure is retained. The proportion of pieces of flesh of which the dimensions are less than 1.2 cm shall not exceed 30% of the drained weight of the container.

2.3.3 **Flake or flakes** - a mixture of particles and pieces of fish most of which have dimensions less than 1.2 cm in each direction but in which the muscular structure of the flesh is retained. The proportion of pieces of flesh of which the dimensions are less than 1.2 cm exceed 30% of the drained weight of the container.

2.3.4 **Grated or shredded** - a mixture of particles of cooked fish that have been reduced to a uniform size, in which particles are discrete and do not comprise a paste.

2.3.5 Any other presentation shall be permitted provided that it:

- is sufficiently distinctive from other forms of presentation laid down in this standard;
- meets all other requirements of this standard;
- is adequately described on the label to avoid confusing or misleading the consumer.

3 Essential composition and quality factors

3.1 Raw material

The products shall be prepared from sound fish of the species in sub-section 2.1 and of a quality fit to be sold fresh for human consumption.

3.2 Other ingredients

The packing medium and all other ingredients used shall be of food grade quality and conform to all applicable Codex standards.

3.3 Description

The products shall not contain more than 10 mg/100 g of histamine based on the average of the sample unit tested.

3.4 Final product

Products shall meet the requirements of this Standard when lots examined in accordance with section 9 comply with the provisions set out in Section 8. Products shall be examined by the methods given in section 7.

4 Food Additives

Only the use of the following additives is permitted.

Additive	Maximum Level in the Final Product
<u>Thickening or Gelling Agents</u> (for use in packing media only) <p>400 Alginic acid 401 Sodium alginate 402 Potassium alginate 404 Calcium alginate 406 Agar 407 Carrageenan and its Na, K, and NH₄ salts (including furcellan)</p> <p>407a Processed <i>Eucheuma</i> Seaweed (PES) 410 Carob bean gum 412 Guar gum 413 Tragacanth gum 415 Xanthan gum 440 Pectins 466 Sodium carboxymethylcellulose</p>	GMP
<u>Modified Starches</u> <p>1401 Acid treated starches (including white and yellow dextrins) 1402 Alkaline treated starches 1404 Oxidized starches 1410 Monostarch phosphate 1412 Distarch phosphate, esterified 1414 Acetylated distarch phosphate 1413 Phosphated distarch phosphate 1420/1421 Starch acetate 1422 Acetylated distarch adipate 1440 Hydroxypropyl starch 1442 Hydroxypropyl starch phosphate</p>	GMP
<u>Acidity Regulators</u> <p>260 Acetic acid 270 Lactic acid (L-, D-, and DL-) 330 Citric acid</p>	GMP
<u>Natural Flavours</u> <p>Spice oils Spice extracts Smoke flavours (Natural smoke solutions and extracts)</p> <p>For Canned Tuna and Bonito Only</p>	GMP
<u>Acidity Regulators</u> <p>Disodium diphosphate</p>	10 mg/kg expressed as P ₂ O ₅ , (includes natural phosphate)

5 Hygiene and Handling

- 5.1** The final product shall be free from any foreign material that poses a threat to human health.
- 5.2** When tested by appropriate methods of sampling and examination as prescribed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the product:
- (i) shall be free from micro-organisms capable of development under normal conditions of storage;
 - (ii) no sample unit shall contain histamine that exceeds 20 mg per 100 g;
 - (iii) shall not contain any other substance including substances derived from microorganisms in amounts which may represent a hazard to health in accordance with standards established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
 - (iv) shall be free from container integrity defects which may compromise the hermetic seal.
- 5.3** It is recommended that the product covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 3-1997) and the following relevant Codes:
- (i) the Recommended International Code of Practice for Canned Fish (CAC/RCP 10-1976);
 - (ii) the Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods (CAC/RCP 23-1979);
 - (iii) the sections on the Products of Aquaculture in the Proposed Draft International Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (under elaboration) 1.

6 Labelling

In addition to the provisions of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985, Rev. 3-1999) the following specific provisions apply:

6.1 The name of the food

- 6.1.1** The name of the product as declared on the label shall be "tuna" or "bonito", and may be preceded or followed by the common or usual name of the species, both in accordance with the law and custom of the country in which the product is sold, and in a manner not to mislead the consumer.
- 6.1.2** The name of the product may be qualified or accompanied by a term descriptive of the colour of the product, provided that the term "white" shall be used only for *Thunnus alalunga* and the terms "light" "dark" and "blend" shall be used only in accordance with any rules of the country in which the product is sold.

¹ The Proposed Draft Code of Practice, when finalized, will replace all current Codes of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products

6.1.3 Form of presentation

The form of presentation provided for in section 2.3 shall be declared in close proximity to the common name.

6.1.4 The name of the packing medium shall form part of the name of the food.

7 Sampling, examination and analyses

7.1 Sampling

- (i) Sampling of lots for examination of the final product as prescribed in section 3.3 shall be in accordance with the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Sampling Plans for Prepackaged Foods (1969) (AQL-6.5) (Ref. CAC/RM 42-1977);
- (ii) Sampling of lots for examination of net weight and drained weight where appropriate shall be carried out in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan established by the CAC.

7.2 Sensory and physical examination

Samples taken for sensory and physical examination shall be assessed by persons trained in such examination and in accordance with the procedures set out in sections 7.3 through 7.5, Annex A and the *Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish in Laboratories (CAC/GL 31 - 1999)*.

7.3 Determination of net weight

Net contents of all sample units shall be determined by the following procedure:

- (i) Weigh the unopened container.
- (ii) Open the container and remove the contents.
- (iii) Weigh the empty container, (including the end) after removing excess liquid and adhering meat.
- (iv) Subtract the weight of the empty container from the weight of the unopened container. The resultant figure will be the net content.

7.4 Determination of drained weight

The drained weight of all sample units shall be determined by the following procedure:

- (i) Maintain the container at a temperature between 20°C and 30°C for a minimum of 12 hours prior to examination.
- (ii) Open and tilt the container to distribute the contents on a pre-weighed circular sieve which consists of wire mesh with square openings of 2.8 mm x 2.8 mm.
- (iii) Incline the sieve at an angle of approximately 17-20° and allow the fish to drain for two minutes, measured from the time the product is poured into the sieve.
- (iv) Weigh the sieve containing the drained fish.

- (v) The weight of drained fish is obtained by subtracting the weight of the sieve from the weight of the sieve and drained product.

7.5 Determination of the washed drained weight (for packs with sauces)

- (i) Maintain the container at a temperature between 20°C and 30°C for a minimum of 12 hours prior to examination.
- (ii) Open and tilt the container and wash the covering sauce and then the full contents with hot tap water (approx. 40°C), using a wash bottle (e.g. plastic) on the tared circular sieve.
- (iii) Wash the contents of the sieve with hot water until free of adhering sauce; where necessary separate optional ingredients (spices, vegetables, fruits) with pincers. Incline the sieve at an angle of approximately 17-20° and allow the fish to drain two minutes, measured from the time the washing procedure has finished.
- (iv) Remove adhering water from the bottom of the sieve by use of paper towel. Weigh the sieve containing the washed drained fish.
- (v) The washed drained weight is obtained by subtracting the weight of the sieve from the weight of the sieve and drained product.

7.6 Determination of presentation

The presentation of all sample units shall be determined by the following procedure.

- (i) Open the can and drain the contents, following the procedures outlined in 7.4.
- (ii) Remove and place the contents onto a tared 1.2 cm mesh screen equipped with a collecting pan.
- (iii) Separate the fish with a spatula being careful not to break the configuration of the pieces. Ensure that the smaller pieces of fish are moved to the top of a mesh opening to allow them to fall through the screen onto the collecting pan.
- (iv) Segregate the material on the pan according to flaked, grated (shredded) or paste and weigh the individual portions to establish the weight of each component.
- (v) If declared as a "chunk" pack weigh the screen with the fish retained and record the weight. Subtract the weight of the sieve from this weight to establish the weight of solid and chunk fish.
- (vi) If declared as "solid" pack remove any small pieces (chunks) from the screen and reweigh. Subtract the weight of the sieve from this weight to establish the weight of "solid" fish.

Calculations

- (i) Express the weight of flaked, grated (shredded and paste) as a percentage of the total drained weight of fish.

$$\% \text{ flakes} = \frac{\text{Weight of flakes}}{\text{Total weight of drained fish}} \times 100$$

- (ii) Calculate the weight of solid and chunk fish retained on the screen by difference and express as a % of the total drained weight of fish.

$$\% \text{ solid \& chunk fish} = \frac{\text{Weight of solid \& chunk fish}}{\text{Total weight of drained fish}} \times 100$$

- (iii) Calculate the weight of solid fish retained on the screen by difference and express as a % of the total drained weight of the fish

$$\% \text{ of solid fish} = \frac{\text{Weight of solid fish}}{\text{Total weight of drained fish}} \times 100$$

7.7 Determination of histamine

AOAC 977.13 (15th Edition, 1990)

8 Definition of defectives

A sample unit shall be considered defective when it exhibits any of the properties defined below.

8.1 Foreign matter

The presence in the sample unit of any matter, which has not been derived from fish, does not pose a threat to human health, and is readily recognized without magnification or is present at a level determined by any method including magnification that indicates non-compliance with good manufacturing practices and sanitation practices.

8.2 Odour/Flavour

A sample unit affected by persistent and distinct objectionable odours or flavours indicative of decomposition or rancidity.

8.3 Texture

- (i) Excessively mushy flesh uncharacteristic of the species in the presentation; or
- (ii) Excessively tough flesh uncharacteristic of the species in the presentation; or
- (iii) Honey-combed flesh in excess of 5% of the drained contents.

8.4 Discolouration

A sample unit affected by distinct discolouration indicative of decomposition or rancidity or by sulphide staining of the meat exceeding 5% of the drained contents.

8.5 Objectionable matter

A sample unit affected by struvite crystals greater than 5 mm in length.

9 Lot acceptance

A lot shall be considered as meeting the requirements of this standard when:

- (i) the total number of defectives as classified according to Section 8 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of the appropriate sampling plan in the Sampling Plans for Prepackaged Foods (AQL-6.5) (CAC/RM 42-1977);
- (ii) the total number of sample units not meeting the presentation and colour designation as defined in section 2.3 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of the appropriate sampling plan in the Sampling Plans for Prepackaged Foods (AQL-6.5) (CAC/RM 42-1977);
- (iii) the average net weight or the average weight of drained meat of all sample units examined is not less than the declared weight, and provided there is no unreasonable shortage in any individual container;
- (iv) the Food Additives, Hygiene and Labelling requirements of sections 4, 5.1, 5.2 and 6 are met.

ANNEX "A"**SENSORY AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

1. Complete examination of the can exterior for the presence of container integrity defects or can ends which may be distorted outwards.
2. Open can and complete weight determination according to defined procedures in sections 7.3 and 7.4.
3. Examine the product for discolouration.
4. Carefully remove the product and determine the presentation according to the defined procedures in Section 7.5.
5. Examine product for discolouration, foreign matter and struvite crystals. The presence of a hard bone is an indicator of under processing and will require an evaluation for sterility.
6. *Assess odour, flavour and texture in accordance with the Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish in Laboratories (CAC/GL 31-1999).*